

Judith Zeichner's work featured in new major motion picture.

Many of Judy's paintings will be featured in the new movie "Peace, Love and Misunderstanding", to open in the summer of 2011. Directed by Bruce Beresford and starring Jane Fonda, it is a story of – among other things – a grandmother/hippie/artist living and working in Woodstock, NY. The paintings, representing the work of Fonda's character "Grace", will be displayed in various scenes throughout the movie. Judy also created original artwork for the painting-in-progress scenes and coached Jane in her painting skills.

From Jane's blog:

LEARNING GRACE

POSTED: Jul 19.10

Grace, my character in "Peace, Love, and Misunderstanding" is an artist. She paints and sculpts in ceramic and uses a potter's wheel and kiln and so I want to learn to do it. I used to paint and I've always wanted to learn to throw a pot –that's what they call it when you use a potter's wheel to make bowls, pots, cups, etc

Judy Zeichner is a Sagittarius like me only she is Dec 1st. I, like her son, am Dec 21st. She's terrific and we really got along. She's from Queens ("not The Queens" she said. "Just Queens.") Came up to Ulster County in 2001. Knew she'd found her place when she mowed the lawn naked for the first time. (Her house is in the woods.) Imagine how good that would feel!! If I lived here I would study with her. She is a wonderful teacher and I really learned a lot in a short time.

In the studio of Artist Judy Zeichner who is helping me with the oil painting



Also from Jane's blog:



Painting on location with Jane.



Judy visiting the set of "Grace's" livingroom.

Everyday Alchemy in the Art of Judith Zeichner

Without making qualitative comparisons between the artists one is about to cite as examples, there is a particular strain of domestic realism that stretches from Pierre Bonnard to Fairfield Porter to Alex Katz. In their different manners, all three of these painters depict people at leisure in settings that appear to combine the creature comforts of bourgeois life with the cultural riches of a genteel bohemianism.

Although previously familiar as a landscape painter, some of whose most outstanding canvases were created during a residency in "Cape Cornwall," a rugged and remote coastal region of southeast England, the name of Judith Zeichner must now be added to this company.

Zeichner's new solo exhibition can be seen at Noho Gallery, 530 West 25th Street, from November 3 through 28, with a reception on November 7 from 4 to 7 pm. The show is called "Hats," but the title is somewhat misleading; for while various hats, ranging from straw sun bonnets to Western stetsons to baseball caps, are worn by all of the figures in her new paintings, Zeichner actually evokes an extensive milieu, fraught with a complexity of subtle undertones.

Indeed, prompted by a painting in the show called "Secret in a Garden," one was tempted to imagine the series as links in a narrative, like film stills. Aside from a couple of interior and beach scenes the setting in most of the paintings is the lawn or deck of what appears to be a sprawling country estate. Perhaps it belongs to one among a group of women who have gathered there for a weekend of friendship, sunbathing, light summer reading, plein air painting, and other convivial activities. "Secret in a Garden" could depict the pivotal moment at which the casual gathering takes on dramatic depth and conflict.

Cropped more in the manner of a cinematic close-up than a traditional composition in painting, the picture depicts two young women having an intimate tête-à-tête. Set against a background of clear blue sky and bright green lawn, their dark designer chapeaux

appear incongruously funereal. The formal elegance of their dresses, in darker shades of the same two colors, also suggests that they have just arrived from the city, as one woman places a hand on the others' shoulder and imparts a confidence that causes her friend to stare off despondently with the one blue eye visible beneath the scalloped brim of her shadowy black hat.



"Secret in a Garden"

Such subjective fantasizing on the basis of implicit content aside, the real drama in Judith Zeichner's paintings derives from the skill with which she merges nuances of figurative gesture with the actual material gestures of painting itself, to achieve, through layered or juxtaposed patches of color, the sense of pictorial tension that Hans Hofmann, referring to the most vital element of Abstract Expressionism, called "push and pull." Indeed, this more palpable sense of drama comes across even when Zeichner paints the figure in repose, as seen in "Rosanne Reading," in which the push and pull derives from the abstract confluence of the woman's green bikini, the simplification of her form, with its barely modulated flesh tones, and the bold blue, green, and white stripes on her recliner.

While "Rosanne Reading" approaches the semiabstraction of a painting by Milton Avery, the shadow-dappled figure of the nude sunbather in "Jody on the Deck" is more worked up in the manner of Bonnard's many paintings of his wife in the bath. Zeichner's handling of the chiaroscuro in the foliage beyond the deck railing behind the figure also recalls the patterning of the Nabis. But while such references to her artistic predecessors are inherent to her painterly sophistication,

the youthful comeliness of the nude figure adds a more immediate erotic element to the aesthetic appeal of the picture.

"Spider Hat" is another painting of a sunbather, albeit with the composition cropped just below her yellow bikini top. The title refers to the intricate spidery shadows cast over one side of the dozing woman's face and neck by the wide weave in the floppy brim of her straw sun hat. Here again, Zeichner shows a mastery of close-up composition comparable to that of Alex Katz. However, it is doubtful that Katz's severely simplified style could accommodate such intricate shadow play convincingly, or that he possesses anything like the painterly versatility that Zeichner displays in her juicy wet-in-to-wet interpretation of the densely wooded area behind the woman's slatted deck chair.

Zeichner shows equal mastery of less fluid techniques, such as drybrush and scumbling, in two other close-up compositions: in "Yellow Hat," the opacity of the pigment employed to depict a woman

hidden behind sunglasses and a big yellow sombrero, along with her blond Scandinavian beauty, enhances a sense of Garboesque mystery. Here, too, the impenetrable impasto, which solidifies even the warm-toned shadows on her sunbaked complexion, could possibly suggest an opaque personality as well.

Then there is "White Nightgown," in which Zeichner demonstrates further virtuosity with the loose gestural manner she employs to evoke a majestic full length standing figure in a transparent nightgown. Set seductively against a vigorously brushed blue ground like a strangely palpable phantom, the woman appears as though illuminated by moonlight pouring through a window into a boudoir, her breasts and pubic patch visible through the gossamer fabric conjured with smoky white strokes.

Here, as in "Reader at the Beach," where a swift, pale triangle suffices to supply the flash of light that delineates an entire face, or in both versions of "Lynn at Work," where the patchy vigor of the brushstrokes exemplify the activity in which a woman standing at an outdoor easel is engrossed, Judith Zeichner splendidly accomplishes the peculiar alchemy which belongs to the art of painting alone. — Ed McCormack